

The author links the Sandinistas' electoral loss to Latin America's Third Wave of Democracy. The term refers to the transition of one Latin American country after another from authoritarian to electoral regimes, beginning with Ecuador in 1982 and concluding with Chile in 1990. In this fashion, Jarquín links the fate of Nicaragua to hemispheric trends.

Finally, in a brilliant postscript, the author leaves the readers with the story of Daniel Ortega's return to power in 2007. His conversion to capitalism and property ownership had led Ortega to sponsor a "Christian movement committed to conservative social policies like the criminalization of abortion" (230). Daniel Ortega is still president today, leading some of his former collaborators to accuse him of ruling like the Somozas. It would seem that the Third Wave of Democracy did not last long in Nicaragua!

Due to Mateo Jarquín's fine research, there is much for readers to contemplate about revolution and authoritarianism in this book.

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JONATHAN C. BROWN

*The Weak and the Powerful: Omar Torrijos, Panama, and the Non-aligned Movement in the World.* By Jonathan C. Brown. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2024. Pp. 320. \$55.00 cloth.  
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In the latter part of the twentieth century, Latin America was a region largely under the rule of military governments. From 1964 to 1989, termed "the time of generals" by Frederick Nunn, 16 of 20 countries in the region experienced military coups, human rights abuses, and the general repression of free expression. However, among this period's many military leaders, Panama's Omar Torrijos stands out for his ideological complexity and steadfast dedication to improving his country's political, social, and economic standing, especially vis-à-vis the United States, which still maintained control of the Panama Canal Zone.

It is this intriguing ambiguity and intricacy that Brown reveals in this book. As the main title suggests, Panama during this time was in a highly asymmetrical relationship with the United States, and as Brown submits, the experience of Panama draws some important parallels to other smaller states of the Global South during the Cold War. But, appropriately, Brown argues that it was Torrijos's persona and force of will that made Panama successful in eventually not only gaining control of its namesake canal, but also essentially changing the country on a fundamental level.

Based upon archival research in the United States, Panama, and Europe, as well as interviews with over a dozen people who knew Torrijos personally, Brown provides the reader with an extremely detailed insight into the motivations of, quirks of, and fascinating stories about Torrijos's rise to power in Panama's National Guard, his goals and projects to improve Panama, and the myriad of challenges he faced during his 13 years in power before his untimely death in 1981.

In chronological order, Brown begins with Torrijos's early experience leading the fight against a Cuba-supported rural insurgency, and explains how these events led Torrijos to the development of his reformist ideologies. Brown then uses the next couple of chapters to review the well-chronicled story of how the old *rabil Blanco* elite-based political system that had accommodated itself to the US presence began to run headlong into an increasingly restive Panamanian nationalist movement.

The main body of the text examines Torrijos's role in the 1968 military coup and the seemingly unorthodox policies that he promulgated after he had established himself as Panama's maximum ruler. As Brown describes, Torrijos was truly not of the left or right, but was for Panama. Brown describes in detail how Torrijos, a man of the people, spent much time personally overseeing early development projects.

Perhaps the most absorbing portion of the text involves Brown's excruciatingly detailed discussion of the events and persons involved in Torrijos's decade-long diplomatic crusade to get the United States to relinquish the canal to Panama. Brown describes meetings, memos, discussions, and the many actors—both Panamanian and American—who contributed to the eventual and hard-fought struggle to convince American policymakers of the wisdom of giving up the canal.

Two chapters in particular provide insight into a lesser-known period of activity by Torrijos in what would later be called "shuttle diplomacy." In one, the reader learns how Torrijos traveled to Europe to build support among those leaders who might support his goal. In the other, the reader learns how Torrijos skillfully convinced a coalition consisting of President Carter, key American senators, and even Hollywood celebrity John Wayne to support his contention that the turnover of the Panama Canal was the right thing to do for both countries.

Brown then concludes his tome with an in-depth analysis of the machinations of Panama's foreign relations under Torrijos with Sandinista Nicaragua and Castro's Cuba, and even of Panama's ancillary role in the US response to the 1979 Iranian Revolution in which Panama accepted the overthrown shah. The final chapter revisits the opening question of what good came of Panama's assertion of its asymmetric power, particularly in its post-1999 assumption and management of the canal. In sum, Brown provides the reader with an excellent and detailed examination of a highly inscrutable figure who not

only permanently changed Panama's history but also positively affected the trajectory of many other smaller developing states of the time.

Brown's work is a welcome addition to our understanding of the evolution of modern Panama and the seminal role Torrijos played in its modern history as well as that of the Western world. This is a treasure trove of information that deepens our understanding of the man who was easily Latin America's most enigmatic leader.

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### CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY STATE EVOLUTION

*Patriots and Traitors in Revolutionary Cuba. 1961–1981.* By Lillian Guerra. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2023. Pp. 508. \$70.00 cloth.  
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In a thorough examination of the Cuban revolutionary state evolution from a “grassroots dictatorship” to a “total state” encapsulated by the criminalizing binary slogan turned state-philosophy, “*Patria o Muerte*,” historian Lillian Guerra achieves two significant feats (12–13). Firstly, she departs from a tradition of regime apologia and celebration that has marred American scholarly work on the Cuban Revolution. Secondly, in doing so, Guerra recovers an authentic history from below of this critical juncture in Cuba's past. In a tour de force, Guerra challenges scholars, activists, and politicians “who have ignored or are politically reluctant to acknowledge the brutality inherent to Communist rule consolidation in Cuba” (ix).

By deconstructing the philosophy of “*Patria o Muerte*” tasking Cubans with matching the “selfless example of Fidel Castro” via “the rendering of free labor and the combination of study and field work in the schools” (8), Guerra details the evolution of an “all-encompassing state that claimed the right to infuse citizens’ consciousness” with a commitment to “‘the Revolution’ before self, family, friends, dreams, or desires” (23). But as Guerra demonstrates, by the 1980s the hegemony of the Cuban state was largely cosmetic, and scores of Cubans, heavily indoctrinated in the state schools, created alternatives and questioned the shallowness of a system that relied on keeping its people ignorant of the world, Cuban history, and its present realities.

Chapter 8, “The Road to Mariel,” is the most authoritative account of the local conditions leading to the exodus of over 124,000 Cubans through the 1980 Mariel Boatlift. Guerra convincingly shows that the age, class, and color of those who left indicated that the absolute gratitude and loyalty of Black Cubans, the workers, and the youth born after the revolution were more state-created myth than truth. Challenges to state control were apparent among the youth, itself targeted by the state to embody the